BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Ministry of
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Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gems6.gov.bc.ca Issue: 03-42 October 17, 2003

- **Manufacturing shipments rise 1.6% in August, boosted by the forest sector**
- **New vehicle sales stall after roaring ahead in July**
- **Men twice as likely as women to die a violent death**

The Economy

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in the province continued to expand in August, increasing (+1.6%, seasonally adjusted) for the second month in a row.** The forest sector was responsible for much of the growth, as both wood (+2.3%) and paper (+3.8%) shipments advanced. Although BC softwood lumber prices remain lower than they were a year ago, they have begun to rise, partly because of supply concerns due to forest fires. This has helped boost the value of shipments by wood manufacturers. However, prices for paper products are softening.

  Within the manufacturing sector, results were mixed. Overall, the value of non-durable goods shipped by BC manufacturers was up 2.6%, while producers of durable goods posted a smaller, but still significant, 0.9% increase. Six of the eleven durable-goods industries, including computers & electronics (+1.3%) and electrical (+3.7%) products, shipped more in August than in the previous month. On the non-durables side, shipments were up in all but three industries. Manufacturers of chemicals (+11.9%) and printing and related (+22.9%) products posted the strongest increases. Food shipments increased a modest 0.4% in August, following strong gains in the previous two months.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canadian shipments slumped (-4.5%) in August, dragged down by a sharp (-7.8%) drop in Ontario, where manufacturing activity ground to a halt following a lengthy power outage.** Summer slowdowns at manufacturing plants exacerbated the situation, as did a rising Canadian dollar. Manufactured goods are often destined for sale in the US and overseas, and prices are frequently denominated in US (or other) currencies. A soaring loonie means that Canadian goods that are valued in our currency become more expensive to foreign buyers at the same time that the US/Canadian exchange rate provides less of a price windfall to Canadian producers with US dollar (or other currency) contracts. Canadian shipments plunged to a 20-month low in August, with the auto and aerospace manufacturing sectors particularly hard-hit.

  Besides Ontario, shipments fell in Quebec (-2.6%), most of Atlantic Canada and Saskatchewan (-2.6%). Despite the fallout from the mad cow situation, which has hobbled Alberta's meat processing and packing industry, shipments from Alberta increased 0.9%, boosted by higher prices for petroleum products.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **New motor vehicle sales in the province stalled (-0.3%, seasonally adjusted) in August, as sales of North American-made cars sputtered (-4.6%) after gaining speed (+22.9%) in the previous month.** North American truck sales (+3.4%) remained robust. Dealers of overseas-manufactured vehicles fared better (total sales were up 2.6%) despite slumping (-2.0%) truck sales.

  New vehicle dealers across the country saw sales drop off from the highs reached in July. Nationally, the number of new vehicles driven off car lots dipped 1.1% as sales fell in all but three provinces. *Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

More Fruits and Veggies

- **If the average Canadian went shopping just once a year, his/her grocery cart would contain 72 kg of fruit, 110 kg of vegetables, 23 kg of oils and fats, 62 litres of milk, 28 kg of other dairy products, 13 dozen eggs and 41 kg of meat.** That's more than 700 pounds of these products. Consumption of fruits, veggies and oils has increased substantially since 1992, when

Report Women in the workforce

Did you know...
Ethan (414) and Joshua (308) were the most popular names for boys born in BC last year, while girls were most likely to be christened Emily (303) or Emma (266).

the same grocery cart would have been somewhat easier to push.

Fruit consumption is up by nearly a fifth (19%) since 1992, while the consumption of vegetables has risen 4%. Fresh fruit, especially apples, oranges and bananas, accounts for the bulk of the fruit consumed. Canadians drank an average of 25 litres of fruit juice last year, 24% more than a decade earlier.

More children, and adults, are dutifully eating their veggies. We consumed an average of 110 kg of vegetables each in 2002, up from 106 kg a decade earlier. Thirty-eight kg (35%) of that total was potatoes, either fresh or processed (e.g., fries or potato chips). That compares to 33 kg in 1992. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Age at Marriage

- **First-time brides and grooms are getting older.** In 1977, the average age at first marriage of brides was 22.5 years, while grooms were typically 25.2 years old when they tied the knot. Last year, the average bride, marrying for the first time, was 28.1 years old, while the groom was 30.2 years old. When all marriages are included, average ages rise to 32.5 years for brides, and 35.3 years for grooms.

  Although June is traditionally the month associated with weddings, last year, one in five (4,505) marriages took place in August. July (2,764) and September (2,611) were the next most popular months, while 11% (2,396) of couples opted to be married in June. January (640) was the month with the smallest number of marriage ceremonies. A total of 21, 245 marriages were solemnized in the province last year.

  Data Source: BC Vital Statistics Agency, 2002 Annual Report

Causes of Death

- **On average, 22 people are killed in BC each year due to natural occurrences such as avalanches, storms or encounters with wild animals.** Last year, there were 22 such deaths in BC, nearly half (9) of them in avalanches and landslides. Another nine people died as a result of exposure to excessive cold, two in encounters with wild animals, one as a result of excessive heat, and one after being struck by lightning.

  Over the 17-year period since 1986, avalanches and landslides have caused the deaths of 131 people in this province, more than any other natural occurrence, although excessive cold (126) and exposure/starvation (62) have also taken a heavy toll. Wild animals have caused 27 deaths in BC since 1987. Of these 12 were due to bear attacks, 12 were due to insects such as bees and wasps, and 3 were the result of cougar attacks. *Data Source: BC Vital Statistics Agency, 2002 Annual Report*

- **Accidents and violence claimed 1,588 lives in BC last year, with men (1,084) being twice as likely as women (504) to die a violent death.** One in twenty deaths in BC last year were the result of accidents or violence. Motor vehicle accidents (399), suicide (396) and accidental falls (309) were the leading causes of death, accounting for just over two-thirds of the total. Another 185 people were accidentally poisoned, 41 drowned, and 37 were murdered. Transportation accidents (31), fires (20) and accidental shootings (9) were other common causes of accidental death. The leading cause of death for men was suicide (306), while women were more likely to succumb as a result of accidental falls (171). Motor vehicle accidents were the second-most-common cause of death for both men (288) and women (111).

  Data Source: BC Vital Statistics Agency, 2002 Annual Report

- **Since 1987, HIV has taken the lives of 2,801 people in British Columbia, most (1,967) of them males between the ages of 30 and 49.** During this fifteen-year period, 92.5% (2,592) of the people who died from HIV disease were male. The largest number (24) of female deaths from HIV occurred in 2000.

  Last year, there were 104 deaths attributed to HIV, including 81 men and 23 women. This was down from 111 in 2001, and the second-lowest number in over a decade. The number of HIV-related deaths peaked at 331 in 1994, then dropped substantially in the late 1990s. The death toll has remained between 100 and 122 per year since 1997.

  Data Source: BC Vital Statistics Agency, 2002 Annual Report

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Infoline Report

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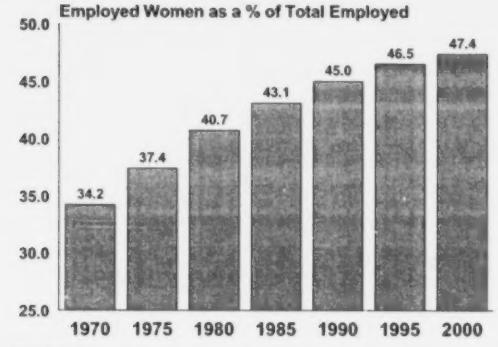
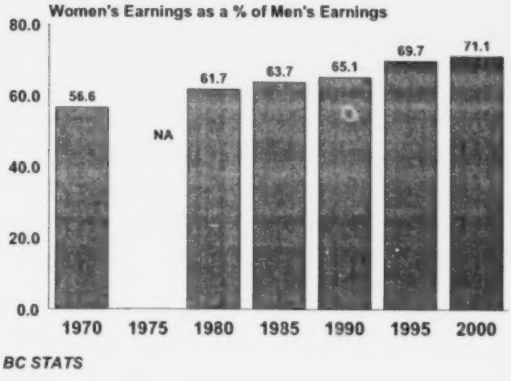
Originally published in *Earnings and Employment Trends*, Issue 03-08. Annual subscription $60 + GST

Women in the Workforce

In the last 30 years, women have made significant progress in the workforce, demonstrated by increased representation and a reduced male/female wage gap





Women's successful integration into the workplace over the past three decades has been well documented. Much progress has been made, but there still remain distinctive differences between the sexes, particularly with regard to salaries.

The monitoring of progress is usually in the form of either comparing women's representation in the workforce or by tracking the male/female wage gap over time, both at the aggregate level and within specific occupations. This article explores the changes that have occurred in BC in the relative standings of the sexes in both these areas. Emphasis is on the comparative shifts of the last decade.

Women's Representation in the Workforce

In terms of women's share of total jobs, from the 70s to the 90s, women aged 15–64 flooded into the workforce, increasing their participation rate from the 50 per cent range in the early 70s to 70 per cent by 1991. Throughout the 90s their participation rate continued to hover around the 70 per cent mark1. Despite this flattening out of the participation rate, their share of total jobs continued to increase. This was due to, not a change in women's behaviour, but a change in men's. In the 90s, men's participation in the workforce declined from 85 to 81 per cent. The outcome has been that by 2001, 47 per cent of all jobs were held by women. This compares to 34 per cent three decades earlier.

[1] Data from the Labour Force Survey show a continuation at the 70 per cent level since the 2001 Census

The gains in the representation of women in the workforce have definitely fallen off since the 1970s. In fact, in the last half of the 90s gains were barely perceptible, averaging only 0.2 per cent annually. The fact that women's participation has remained around the 70 per cent mark for over a decade may imply that future advances are unlikely. Women occupying 47 per cent of all jobs may be the upper limit unless men decrease their participation further.

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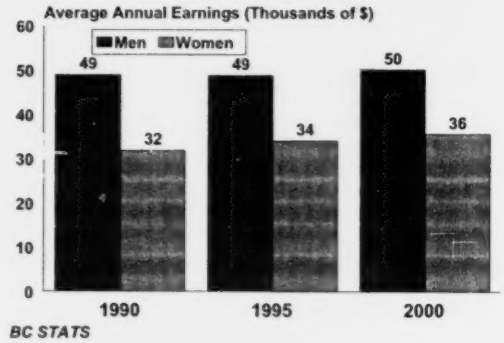
The Male/Female Wage Gap

Throughout the same time period women were also making gains on men in their earning power. In 1970, women earned not much more than one-half of what men earned, but by 2000 this rate increased to 71 per cent. The 2001 Census shows that women who worked full-year/full-time in 2000 earned $35,636 compared to $50,159 for men.

So while women's earnings still fall well short of men's, they did increase by 11.9 per cent over the decade while that for men increased by only 2.6 per cent. Women's earnings seemed to edge up throughout the decade while men's stalled in the first half of the 90s and then increased by 2.8 per cent between 1995 and 2000.

BC Women who work full-year/full-time still earn considerably less than their male co-workers



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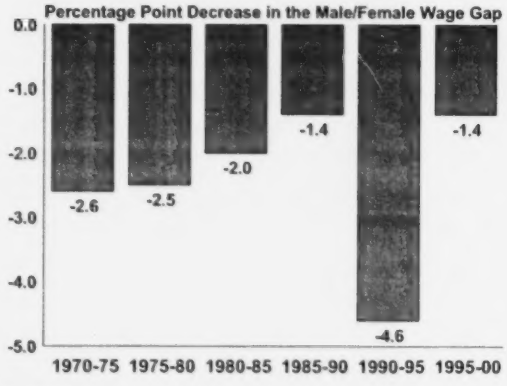
The faltering of men's earnings in the first half of the 90s meant that women made a significant catch-up. Their earnings as a per cent of men's increased from 65.1 to 69.7, which is a decline in the wage gap of 4.6 percentage points. Then between 1995 and 2000 the reduction in the gap dropped back to 1.4 percentage points, more in line with what had been going on in the 1980s. However, over the ten year period, the 90s saw women reduce the earnings gap with men by 6 percentage points, which exceeds the gains of either the 70s or 80s.



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Although women still have a long way to go to earn comparable salaries to men, the 90s saw big improvements. As well, it is likely that much more of the gap will be chipped away in the years to come. Currently, the older the woman the less she earns relative to the men in her age group. An explanation for this gap is that women's relative education level is far surpassed by men's among the older workforce. However, the male/female education gap does a switch around in the under-35 age group – women now have relatively more university degrees than men among this younger workforce. Thus, it will only be a matter of time before women's wages approach those of men's, as the relatively lesser-educated women retire.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/03	% change on one year ago
BC	4,146.6	0.8
Canada	31,629.7	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2002 Prelim.	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	134,365	2.7
GDP *($ 1997 millions)*	126,141	1.8
GDP *($ 1997 per Capita)*	30,459	0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	19,445	-0.2
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Aug	2,793	1.6
Merchandise Exports - Aug	2,515	-3.3
Retail Sales - Jul	3,409	0.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		12-month avg
(all items - 1992=100)	Aug '03	% change
BC	120.9	2.5
Canada	122.5	3.3
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '03	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,219	0.1
Employed - BC	2,018	-0.3
Unemployed - BC	201	4.0
		Aug '03
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	9.1	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.0	8.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Oct 15/03	Oct 16/02
Prime Business Rate	4.50	4.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.55	5.30
- 5 year	6.40	6.70
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Oct 15/03	Oct 16/02
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3242	1.5840
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.7540	0.6314
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '03	one year ago
BC	686.99	2.7
Canada	669.59	2.4

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, September 2003
- Exports, August 2003
- Major Projects Inventory, June 2003

Next week

- Consumer Price Index, September 2003
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 2nd Quarter 2003

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